

**EVALUATION OF CALIFORNIA'S AFTER SCHOOL LEARNING AND
SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM: 1999-2001
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹
February 1, 2002**

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In cooperation with
Healthy Start and After School Partnerships Office
California Department of Education**

This report is a summary of the findings of statewide and local evaluations of the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (ASLSNPP). Outcome data show a consistent pattern of positive results on student achievement, attendance, behavior, and reductions in grade retention. State and local evaluations of the ASLSNPP demonstrate:

- Positive impacts on participating students' achievement as measured by (a) SAT-9 Reading and Math test scores, with the most marked changes statewide in Reading, and (b) improved student grade point averages as reported by local programs.
- Especially large improvements in achievement among the most high-risk students, including those initially in the lowest quartile on standardized test scores and English Language Learners.
- Improved student regular day attendance, with some evaluations showing particularly large improvements for students having the highest absences prior to participating in the program.
- The largest gains in attendance and achievement typically among students who participated at the highest level, referred to as "higher dosage" participants.
- A direct relationship in some programs between improved attendance and improved achievement.
- More positive attitudes among participating students toward school, enhanced confidence about learning, and increased educational aspirations.
- Improved social skills and behavior, reduced disciplinary incidents at school, and reduced suspensions among participating students.
- Improved feelings of safety among participating children and youth and increased confidence among parents concerning their children's safety.
- Very high levels of support for the program among children and youth, parents, teachers, school administrators, and community members.

In addition, the evaluations show substantial cost savings associated with the ASLSNPP as a result of reductions in grade repetitions. At every grade from kindergarten through 8th, the program is associated with a decrease in the number of

¹ Support for the preparation of this report was provided by the Foundation Consortium.

students retained in grade. In the primary grades, there is a 53.4% decrease in grade retention associated with the program. Savings to the State related to reduced grade repetition, based on per pupil funding and the proposed expansion in the Governor's Budget for 2002-2003,² are projected to exceed \$20 million annually. Savings in 2001-2002 are projected at more than \$11 million. Additional savings related to reduced juvenile crime have been reported by local programs and law enforcement agencies.

The evaluations also show that the program is highly cost-effective. It is one of the lowest-cost academic interventions in California, costing the State \$1.67 per student hour of participation. A primary reason for the low cost of the ASLSNPP is the statutory requirement that every \$2 in State funding for the program be matched locally by \$1 in other funding or in-kind resources. Matching funds to support the program are provided by school districts, cities, counties, community-based organizations, businesses, and foundations. Programs also have large contributed resources through volunteers—AmeriCorps workers, college students preparing to be teachers, senior citizens, and community members. The result is that most programs maintain higher adult-child ratios than the required 1:20 and are able to provide considerable one-to-one student help in tutoring and homework assistance. Additional contributions include the services of parks and recreation departments, libraries, museums, arts centers, and service organizations. Programs are coordinated with school operations, with schools remaining open and providing staff, space, facilities, computer labs, and libraries.

Quality services and economies are also achieved through close collaboration with community organizations. ASLSNPP programs are offered jointly by school districts and Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs and YWCAs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, prominent youth organizations such as Beacons, and community-based organizations. California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California campuses provide significant support to ASLSNPP programs, with many of their students engaged in service learning, and their outreach activities coordinated with local programs.

Programs are now in their second or third year of operation and have developed significant capacity. Many have waiting lists of eligible children, and it is estimated that more than 100,000 children and youth are currently ready to be served. Programs across the State have prepared to serve additional students and can readily accommodate the expansion, from services to 97,000 to 176,000 children and youth, proposed in the Governor's Budget. The evaluation findings make clear the importance of providing services to these additional students. The ASLSNPP, which has become the Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (B/ASLSNPP), has shown since its inception its ability to prevent student failure and increase the safety of children and youth. The cost savings associated with it are substantial, making its expansion one of the soundest educational investments that can be made by the State of California.

² The Governor's Budget for 2002-2003 proposes expanding funding for the program by \$75 million (from \$87.8 million to \$162.8 million), allowing for services to 176,000 children and youth, an increase of 79,000.